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# INTEGRITY

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Vol.3, No.11

Raising Children

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synthesis of **RELIGION** and **LIFE** for our times.

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# The Vocation of Parents

**S**AINT FRANCIS DE SALES said, "The purpose of parenthood is to people the earth with adorers of God and to fill heaven with saints." And there it is.

We can base all our ideas on bringing up children on that motive. It is a consideration for every married couple with children, for all souls who hope some day to be parents. There is the whole purpose of parenthood. It follows then that everything we do in relation to our children should have that end in view.

This is the task to which mothers and fathers should be dedicated. How few parents are working toward that end, however! Why are they neglecting to do so? Not out of sheer ignorance, usually, but mainly because ever so many, even Catholics, do not know the purpose of parenthood. As a matter of fact, many Catholics in spite of memorized catechism lessons are hardly aware of the purpose of their own existence: to know God, to love Him, and to serve Him forever in heaven. And though we may not condone their senseless driftings through life, nevertheless we must hastily condemn them.

## Mothers

We know there are mothers today neglecting that goal of parenthood, but not because they are deliberately ignoring it. Rather they are ignorant of it.

But mothers should be told and should be reminded over and over again. And it must be impressed on them that they should give unstintingly all the time and consideration required for the task.

In our day most mothers are not remiss in child care. We deliver oil them, feed them, dress them well. We attend to all the rules of hygiene and health. Even the poorest of us give remarkable care to these aspects of child-raising. When I lived in a slum clearance housing project mothers regularly attended classes in "nutrition" and other lectures at the health center. They brought their babies for "shots" for prevention of various diseases; they made use of the variety of medical and dental treatment rendered by New York City's free health stations, and its hospitals, clinics and dispensaries. There was a surprising amount of talk among neighbors concerning child care, child education, child psychology.

Yet while we raise strong, sturdy bodies and alert, lively minds we are apt to leave their souls stunted, warped, left in a



foreverness of infancy. Their minds and bodies take up our time and effort. Their souls are tightly closed buds that may never be opened to the light of God and blossom on this earth.

When we once know what parenthood is all about and recognize what is before us we will learn to love and study our children in a new, bolder stronger way. We will have willingness for their childish chatter and we will have more patience and understanding with them. Mothers must look on their little ones as souls that belong to God and whom He holds dear. Then we will lift our daily living with the children to a higher level than we might achieve with the most noble of materialistic ideals.

The charge is commonly made that mothers are too "tied down," their existence is too drab, they are shut away from the world. If only we could be shut away from the world! Actually for most of us the truth is that the world is too much with us. We are being suffocated by it.

With radio on from rising till retiring, gab sessions on the telephone, the "dailies," the picture-splattered magazines filling in, in panting sentences, the details omitted on the broadcast bulletins and now in more and more homes television too—are taken up in a whirl by the world. How does a mother manage to keep her nerves calmed, her emotions stable when they are constantly under attack?

And most of us have a particular weak spot. I'll admit politics, the state of the nation and the world that disturbs me. Then I know a woman who gets worked to near hysteria by the radio soapbox serials. After one particularly trying day at the radio she was in tears when her husband came home from work and couldn't prepare his supper, she was so broken up over the adventures of Ma-Soap-and-So. And she was not a neurotic middle-aged woman but a young bride. There are others whose minds are always filled up with the gossips and sins (imagined or otherwise) of their neighbors and the affairs of their own assorted relatives. There are mothers to whom cleanliness is such a fetish that they are always drawn taut and tense with household cleaning, laundering, and face washing (usually accompanied by slappings and scoldings) their little ones, and are frightfully disturbed over smudges on their scrubbed-down domains.

It does not matter whether we are preoccupied with national affairs, gossip or a shiny floor, the Devil achieves his aim when such things interfere with our home life and our children. It is true that children can "get on your nerves," cause you to blow up and become sharp and short-tempered. But if we find it happen-

daily and many times a day we ought to search our hearts to see if it is actually the children who are the cause or if their annoyances are only the fuel that sets off a powder keg of nerves and irritation inside us; a powder keg we ourselves filled up with outside misery that should not have been permitted entrance in the first place.

Perhaps it is good for mothers to be "up-to-the-minute," smart, socially active, but first of all they should be *mothers*. If we can't be everything, then let's not put motherhood in last place and get out of the running. What our children need are their mothers. So we ought to concentrate on that, living strictly according to our vocation, being worthy of it, seeking to perfect ourselves in it.

Yes, to be a mother we have to face living in a mature, grown-up way and let our life be full of purpose, our actions have meaning and our existence be fruitful. That's why it's so disheartening to see mothers allow everything else under the sun to fill up their minds, prevent them from thinking. That's why it's so wrong for mothers to dissipate themselves on stupid worthless chatter or become addicts of movies, radio and tabloids.

No, we don't have to enter a convent to combine work and prayer and do all we do for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, especially in our case, the souls in our own household. We must work at being a loving mother.

There is one cue in particular, a danger signal which mothers should watch for. Beware the words, "Go 'way, don't bother me!" Of course, children should not be spoiled, pampered, catered to as though mother were a lackey and the child a king but something is amiss when mothers are always seeking ways to "chase them away" either to a movie or a friend's house, or elsewhere to play. Blessed is the mother who gives in a well-balanced, cheerful and wholesome way her thought and time and life for her children.

## Fathers

As to fathers, everything there is to say about fathers can be summed up thus, "The husband should be the head of the house." Simply because this expression is bandied about and looked over today we no longer have any concept of what it means and what it entails. No ruthless tyranny, no bloated, beastly authority substitutes for fatherhood. The divine plan for fatherhood makes it a sacred thing. If we rightly understood the sense in which the husband is the head of the house and the wife the heart we would know why a certain Trappist priest said, "If I had my way, vigil lights would be burned before married couples."



One spiritual writer has described the family as a little church with the father as the bishop.

Coming down to plain, everyday existence, let us face the fact of father's first place. The father rightly should be the provider and mainstay of the family but his vocation consists of far more than that. It is not enough to bring home a pay envelope and consider his obligation fulfilled. He should be more than a provider, just as the mother should be more than a housekeeper and nursemaid. He must shoulder the responsibilities in managing home and family, should take the initiative in new ventures in the development of the family and its progress and welfare. It is so wrong for a husband to leave all the decisions, all the responsibilities, all the thinking to the wife. If God had not wanted marriage to be a partnership, he could so simply have created one sex.

Yet there are homes where one partner must do the work of two. Usually it is the woman, but she can never really be father and mother both. Many heroic souls carry this burden bravely but usually everyone suffers from it. The children are deprived of well-balanced homes and a real father. The mother weighted down with more than her share often suffers physically and mentally. The man, not fully living his manhood, is debilitated and whatever front he brags remains weak and undeveloped in character.

Some of the blame lies on women themselves, mothers who brought their sons up pampered and spineless, wives who want to run the whole show themselves. Yet there are men who deliberately shirk the duties of the "head of the house." The nation is full of them settling the affairs of the world and big league baseball over their beers, disdaining as beneath them their kingship at home.

But a home must have its head. Authority is necessary to order and life. The mother having a twenty-four hour day job in her own realm needs a wise head and a good heart beside her. The children need a father to fill the place God made for fatherhood in their lives. And Dad must be more than a good sport, he must be a good soul. Our children's first world is—mother, father, home. If we teach them to say "Our Father Who art in heaven," they ought to have a decent meaning for the word "father" and where else will they learn it but from their personal experience with their father on earth. If we teach them to call God "Our Father," then *father* must be a tremendous living force else the word is a mockery, perhaps a blasphemy.

Once an agnostic acquaintance told me he could never "accept" the fourth commandment. He added bitterly, "If you knew what associations the word has for me, you would never ask me to call God 'Father.'" Granted all fathers may not cause such a poisonous reaction in their sons. But how many have been such a negative quantity in their children's lives that whole generations have grown up never quite making any sense out of calling God their "Father."

They do not think of God as the Source of Life when they regard only vaguely and perhaps in a most accidental way their own father's part in bringing them to life. They cannot imagine God providing for them, nurturing them, solicitous for them, protecting them, supremely interested in their affairs, tenderly possessing them, even laying down His life for them, when their earthly father was hardly the type to do these things. Can we expect our children to have faith in a heavenly Father Whom they cannot see when they can't even have faith in the only father they do know?

The head of the house ought to be in his own human way and in his earthly realm the father, as God is the Father in His divine way and supernatural realm. Reams have been written on motherhood but there is still too little said today on the place and importance of fatherhood. Yet just as a mother ought to be the doorway through which a child first sees Mary, mother of us all, so a father should be the portal through which the child first glimpses God, Creator and Father of us all.

### Adorers of God

As for "bringing up children" there is only one way to do it: *bringing them up to God.*

It often seems the biggest part of raising them is the moral and discipline part—bringing them up to be good or bad, polite or ill-mannered. Now I do not wish to minimize the importance of morality, nor could I. But really morality ought to be an effect of religion and not the sum total of it.

We would not have such a terrific time with "good and evil" if we worked at making our children God-conscious and God-loving.

When I was a child my mother often said of me, "She is always good. . . . She never gives me any trouble." What my mother didn't know was that she had inspired such a love in me for her that I couldn't bear to do anything to offend her. I considered her feelings first, and far above my own. If she bought me



a dress I didn't like, I would exclaim over it and admire it. I might be miserable wearing it but would have been more miserable if I had turned away from her gift and spoiled her pleasure in giving it to me. Interrupt play to run errands? Her wishes and needs and desires were more important to me than all the games and playmates in the world. Mind the younger children, help in the house? Naturally. Disobedience? It never occurred to me. The idea of disobeying would have been repulsive. I loved her and would suffer if she were hurt in any way. Serving her was as natural and as easy as breathing.

Cannot parents inspire in their children such a love of God that they will think only of pleasing Him, of serving Him and all this in a joyful, easy way?

Of course, there will always be the pressure on them (and us too) of the effects of original sin, so they are not going to be perfect or even near it. But God supplies the graces we need to counteract those effects. And once they have received Holy Communion they have a daily source of strength. There will be routines of prayer, even simple prayers, morning and night, grace at mealtimes. Later when they are ready for it they join in the family rosary.

The way to lead them is the way of love. God gave us ten commandments, most of which are "thou shalt not . . ." Yet He summarized them in just two, and these are "thou shalt love the Lord Thy God and Love Thy neighbor as Thyself." So we should teach them to love God and they will love His law, His Will. They will not be so often beset with temptations to evil when their hearts are intent on doing good.

And all this is only the beginning. We want them to become "*adorers* of God." This is the easy part, believe it or not. We don't wait until they start school and are handed a catechism. It starts with their earliest years. While they are "under our feet" in the kitchen we go about preparing meals, doing the dishes but talking to them of God, of the purpose of life, of the Redeemer Who opened the gates of Paradise for them. Children in their baptismal innocence have an unsmudged intelligence and can easily grasp the ideas in the Real Presence, the Holy Eucharist, the Incarnation.

When we tell them stories we need not neglect Goldilocks or Winnie-the-Pooh (and Winnie is good for laughs) but we should lean heavily on stories of the lives of the saints (how they love to hear about Francis of Assisi!) and incidents in the life of Christ. The nativity story is one they love (and play) the year



nd. They should learn hymns too. Most children enjoy singing. Hymns make good lullabies.

And in how many ways we can remind them of the power and majesty and goodness of God: in blue skies and white clouds, rain, in snow, in the variety and quantity of snowflakes, blades of grass, trees and leaves of trees, in every living thing about them. "See that great bridge that holds trains and cars and people . . . see how God has made men that they can build such things." When we point out a boat or a house or other works of man it is always, "Wasn't God good to make men so they can do these things and *do* do them?"

A soul can spend a lifetime studying, contemplating, learning about God and still never exhaust itself. Our children can learn to see the design of God in everything about them. They will so effortlessly become constantly recollected in God. How will they adore Him! And knowing Him and serving Him will be a joy not a drudge. Love makes all things possible. As they become true lovers of God they will not falter at adversities that meet them later. Sacrifice, self-denial, mortifications which inevitably must be faced in life will not be met with resentment, frustration and neuroses.

Putting God first in their lives will do more toward making them normal, happy human beings than all the psychology books ever written. It will give them a right sense of values for all time. It will be the base and foundation on which they stand. In their lives too, whatever vocations and careers they pursue their lives will have purpose and direction. All this is not intended as a mere piety pep talk. It is too vital to be dismissed as such.

Actually we have an *obligation* to do this much for our children. A glance at all the messy lives around us ought to awaken us to the task, for if ever a people have been diverted from their duty, we have been.

We will not consider at this time ourselves, the grown-ups. We will draw a curtain of shame over that category for now. But what of the youngsters?

### "Restless, O Lord!"

How can we look upon the tragedy of our future wives and daughters attending theatres and literally screaming in pseudo ecstasy at a radio singer? What do you think of the tender souls who live in make-believe worlds where Hollywood idols sate their dreams and desires? I recall a nine-year-old who came to our house and amidst sighs and limpid gesturings spoke of the god-man she worshipped on the screen. These faraway mortals

held her enraptured, body and soul. It was enough to sicken your heart and make you weep. As these children grow older they carry on in their imaginary world and confuse it with reality through such a blur they transfer their affections to nearer mortals and new creatures. Boys and girls engage in adolescent but passionate romancing, have crushes on public characters of dubious reputation, are obsessed with sports, amusements, cosmetics, clothes, books. I mean obsessed truly in the sense that these "creatures" are given time and consideration and devotion out of all normal proportions. But, it is said, they'll eventually marry and settle down. Indeed? And join our generation of divorce, re-marriage, broken homes, neurotic children?

Well, what can parents do? Restrict movie attendance? Be stricter in supervising their activities? These are methods for handling a disease. The right way is to prevent the disease from taking hold. Hence the purpose in having them God-conscious and God-loving.

For all these vain obsessions are only wild, weed-like growths on souls which should have been basking in the sun of God's light and bringing forth good fruit. And restless and dissatisfied they will be, wasted their lives, if all their growth is away from God for Whom they were created. And all their energies and talents and gifts will end in barrenness or in evil fruits.

Parents have indeed the obligation of telling their children the truth about life. And the truth about life is that we are made for God and will know no rest or happiness until we are centered in Him, till our love is brought to bear on Him.

And woe to us if our children must go through empty searching years, needlessly suffering turmoil and wasted pain only to discover when youth is gone and life is spent the happiness that their hungry hearts had craved. Let it not be said of us that because we neglected to tell them from the start our children will someday discover the Divine Lover and cry out with remorse as Augustine: "Too late have I loved Thee! Too late have I known thee!"

Now is the time to lead them to the Divine Lover. And as we feed and clothe their bodies let us give the best to their souls. Encourage frequent if not daily Communion that their souls be nourished with the Body of Christ and clothed with the raiment of God.

And if your children have those sensitive hearts that are stirred by the splendors of sunsets and moved by beautiful music to know a loneliness overpowering them and an ache within them



you can tell them the truth, that at such moments they are getting cloudy glimpses of the beauty their souls seek and only when they achieve complete union with their Maker will the loneliness be gone and the pain of longing gone with it.

### Fill Heaven with Saints

This can mean only one thing, that our work is not done until death, until they are in heaven. So we may even still be at it in the next world if we arrive there before they do (which is the usual thing).

You see, it is not a tidy matter of dismissing our responsibility when they come of age in the world's count of years, when they marry, when they go their separate ways. The parish priest does not cross off his list those aged twenty-one and over, for his is a lifetime work with many souls. Ours is a lifetime work with a few specific ones.

Parents are often confronted with sickening failures in their grown-up children. A son turns out a drunkard, a daughter falls away from the Faith, another perhaps will enter into a bad marriage. What are we to do? Feel sorry for ourselves? Nag and scold them? Tell the neighbors and relatives our child (or children) is breaking our hearts?

Well, we should counsel and admonish them, if it will do any good. But what we really must do is pray and sacrifice and do penance and make reparation—and in *secret, unobtrusive ways*. We must suffer for the souls of our children! The price of salvation is suffering. We should pay it, buying their souls with our pain and sorrow and even, when the time comes, our death.

Sounds rough? Hard to take? I'll admit it's a far cry from just washing, ironing and cooking for them.

But think of the Trappists and similar Orders, the cloistered nuns, the priests, the religious brothers and sisters all over the world who are living lives of sacrifice, hard work and reparation for souls, for souls they very often do not know and will never meet this side of heaven. Is it too much to ask of us, that we do as much for the souls we brought into existence, our brothers and sisters in Christ whom we refer to as "our own flesh and blood"?

Or will we, mother and father, be Adam and Eve to our children as our first parents were to all of us? Will they lose Paradise because we would not win it for them?

And how to get them to heaven? It will depend even more on what we are than what we do. You have heard it said that we cannot give to others what we haven't got to give. And

every teacher will admit he has always to be a page ahead of his students. So making saints of them means we must become saints ourselves. There's nothing fantastic in that.

But it does mean in forming their characters we'll have to straighten out our own. If they require chastisement, let's not balk at being at least equally severe with ourselves. While we are finding fault with them we can examine our own consciences—and being cheerful with it all! "Joy is the echo of God's life in us."

Do you recall the story of the Cure of Ars who spent as much as eighteen hours a day in the confessional and how people flocked from all over France to him? How did he get that great power of healing souls? Just by sitting there hearing confessions all day? No. It was the remaining hours he spent before the Blessed Sacrament, the penances he inflicted on himself, the work he did on his own soul. He became a channel of God's grace. He emptied himself of self and left room only for God and so God could work through him.

And so it is with us. Our "eighteen hours daily" are perhaps our actual day's work and activity but behind that must be the work of God. We too must become channels through which God's grace can flow to others, particularly our children. It means we must root out petty whims, faults, selfishness, self-centeredness, all our vices and vanities; clean out our hearts; empty ourselves of every despicable, worthless, nasty trait. It won't be easy. We may in fact be doing it for the rest of our lives and never quite complete the job. But we have to keep at it. We will be wells holding God's refreshing waters for our children. We must not let those waters be muddied or contaminated.

Have you ever seen a child present an awkward, ill-made product of his own handiwork as a gift to his parents? Poorly finished and smudged with finger marks it is, yet his parents understand the effort and motive behind it and the love it represents. Have you ever seen a child make such a present for his father? And mother first took it and cleaned and beautified it and wrapped it attractively before it was presented to father?

We, too, are but clumsy children with our limited intelligences and skill and we are trying to fashion these souls for God. But when the work is finished Mary will bring it to Him with us—but first she will add her own lovely finishes and we will hardly recognize the magnificent gift it becomes. And our loving Father will at last bring their souls to ultimate perfection. God always rewards good parents.

"MRS. J."



# Springboards for Sanctity

The market is glutted with literature on the scientific raising of children: how to feed them, dose them, bathe them, clothe them, entertain them; how to encourage good habits and discourage bad ones; how to teach them to like "worth-while" things, such as good music, good books, good pictures; how to develop, in fact, every facet of a child's personality except what most matters—his sanctity. And there is some reason for this, beyond the modern obsession with materialism. Should you ever come across a book that lays down hard-and-fast rules for manufacturing saints out of pint-sized packages of raw humanity, read it, if you like, for the sake of novelty, or even for inspiration, but don't walk its chalk-line unless you're prepared to end up with a flock of wild-eyed lunatics, yourself and your husband included. If a blueprint could be drawn up for turning human fledglings into saints, isn't it logical to suppose that the Church, the mother of saints, would long ago have adopted such a plan? It is partly because of the incalculable mystery of sanctity—because saints have a habit of cropping up in the most unexpected places, and under the most extraordinary circumstances, that the Church lays such stress on the pricelessness of a single human life—even (to the scandal of modern eugenics) that of the unborn child of a moronic mother and an alcoholic father with criminal tendencies.

This does not mean, of course, that there is not a crying need for books dealing with the question, for the rearing of a family is not easy today. Oral statements, backed by the pulsing force of the warmth and sincerity of their author, are in disrepute in this country, in these days of quasi-universal literacy. When people hear the word "lie" they immediately envision the primitive, spoken lie. How desperate will be the plight of that awakened generation to whom the written word will be as powerless! While print still wields an influence, while the quotation from black-and-white still is regarded as having some evidence of veracity, I hope that those mothers who can will write books, not filled with hoary platitudes and sugary saws, or pat formulas and blood-sweat-and-tear-stained contrivances, but with an honest, down-to-earth presentation of the problems mothers are faced with today and experience-born suggestions as to how they may meet them. The important thing is that they should be written by mothers for mothers.

Most child psychologists are unequipped for writing this type of book. In the first place, few mothers can follow them through

the labyrinthine ramifications of "conditioned reflexes," "behavior patterns," "inhibitions," "frustrations," and all the antiseptic, stereotyped patter of the trade, and if they can, the danger is that they will lose sight of the basic issue.

I once listened to a talk given by a Catholic woman child-psychologist before a parent-teacher meeting. The good Sisters were all there, drinking in her words with the respectful good manners so characteristic of them. The title of the talk was "Growth of the Child in Love"—a subject near and dear to the heart of every person listening. The speaker divided the child's "love-life" into three neat sections: the first phase she called "self-love," the second "love for members of the same sex" and the third, the crowning glory, the aim toward which every child should be guided "healthy love for members of the opposite sex." Case histories were brought in to show how each phase manifested itself in different children. The psychologist did not once mention the love of God, and the shattering subject was never brought up.

Personally, I found nothing objectionable in the talk except that it could have been given before any parent-teacher group, not necessarily one whose main objective is to foster the Christian way of life—and that it did not fulfill the promise of its title. It would have been more appropriate to call it "Development of the Sex Instinct in Children."

A mother cannot make saints of her children, but she can turn her eyes to One Who can. Only He can plant the seed of sanctity in a soul, and only the movement of His grace can stir that soul to respond in a manner that will bring the seed to fruition. One task remains to the mother—the preparation of a fertile field for the seed to fall on—the "good soil" of the parable. The rules are loose and elastic, and there's room for all her ingenuity, and for mistakes and apparent failures and repeated new beginnings. All it takes is a lifetime of unceasing effort.

Our first task, it seems to me, before we can become better mothers, is to become better persons. We must begin in the only place where we have plenty of elbow-room to operate—the cell of our own being. There we can give full vent to any talents we may possess for fault-finding and trouble-shooting. And it's a task worth our warmest zeal, for there is no child so rebellious, so recalcitrant, so full of wiles and trickery, as this self we have set out to subdue. We must take advantage of all the help available—prayer, the sacraments, spiritual reading and meditation, the company of the saints in heaven and the souls in purgatory. I



Don't mean that we should set up an ideal self, stipulating the virtues we should like to acquire, and go on a spiritual shopping-tour, for we can no more make saints of ourselves than we can of our children. What is required is that we strip off, little by little, the layers of complacency and self-indulgence, the pet myths and hidden attachments that wall us in, so that God may lay hands on the vital fibre of His creation and fashion it to His own liking.

We can also raise our eyes to our Blessed Mother. In becoming the mother of Christ, Mary accepted all of God's children as her own. So we, too, must learn to mother, with compassion and concern, not only our own babies, but all who come within the orbit of our lives, especially Christ's darlings—the poor, the homeless, and the despised. And because it is in the very nature of love to swell and overspill its boundaries, we shall find, if we are true to divine promptings, that this will happen almost in spite of ourselves.

We cannot wait until we have reached perfection, however, before engaging in the other duties of our vocation, for if we live to be ninety we'll still be plugging away at it. Keeping a firm grip on this unfinished business, let's tuck it under our wing and get to work on the world about us.

What a curious paradox is life in the Mystical Body! "Don't go to heaven alone," says an old counsel, "take someone with you." A stirring piece of advice, but a bit dangerous for some wives and mothers who, fired with what they believe to be apostolic fervor, think they can drag their families in by the ears.

The fact of the matter is that, although salvation, through God's magnificent gift of free will, lies in our hands, it is almost impossible for any of us, except a rare and holy hermit, to get there alone. We need the help of those about us. And it seems to me that the choice of a vocation comes down to a choice of those companions who can best help us—and whom we can best help—arrive at our common goal. There we find ourselves impelled to move ahead by the enthusiasm of those about us, nudged forward when we would hang back, giving and receiving encouragement. More effectively than anything else, the goads and buffetings received in the jostling contact serve to push us back into the current, should we seek a softer way, more to our liking, but leading, perhaps, to the prison of self-love.

The family is a miniature figure of the Mystical Body: the father representing God-like authority, the mother Church-like

instrumentation and cooperation, and the children the trusting faithful.

The American home once provided a fairly adequate setting for the rearing of a family. It was a little fortress—a refuge from the world. Mother was always there. Father came home in the evening to find relaxation and comfort after his tussle with outside forces, and to reward good deeds and right wrongs committed in his absence. Children had the sense of security that comes with being told what to do and what not to do. Even the sting of discipline that followed misbehavior was more welcome than the sense of bewilderment many of today's children feel in the face of the shifting, or absence of, definite values. The home had few labor-saving devices, transportation was slow, chores were many, late hours were unheard of—and yet there was time, time for living together, for working and playing and praying together. God was good to us. He gave us His abundance to use for His glory, to help bring about His kingdom on earth, and we muffed our chance. For if the home had not opened its doors to false ideals, if it had not succumbed to the worship of "things," if it had remained true to its Founder and followed His teachings, the gates of hell would not have prevailed against it.

Today the world has invaded the home. And many of us are so impressed by the fact that we have only to press a button on the radio to bring any corner of the world to our living-rooms, we fail to see that it is there in another, sinister sense. While motherhood has been subjected to a campaign of banal sentimentality which finds expression in maudlin demonstrations and the annual farce of a commercial Mother's Day, the living mother is defrauded of her true mission. Fatherhood as a state in life has been completely divested of honor. The dehumanization of man that is taking place in industry has found its counterpart in the home in a demasculinization of the father, and that vocation in which a man may actually imitate and cooperate with his Maker through his function as procreator and provider, has become a national joke. In magazines, radio, movies, comics, in all the mass-production media of communication, we see the role of father reduced to a stock figure of well-meaning but bungling inefficiency. And as for the children—where actual contraception is not resorted to, the rhythm system succeeds grimly in reducing the advent of many a child to an "accident," a failure of the method to live up to its sterile promise.

Of course, once the baby appears on the scene, he is loved. God, Who has given maternal tenderness even to animals, has



men to that. The child's welfare and development become the prime concern of the parents. They want him to have every material, social, and educational advantage available. So father sacrifices his manhood at the office, and mother sacrifices the fullness of her womanhood in the home (no more children; another child would rob this one of his opportunities; if a suitable nursery school can be found mother joins father in the effort to swell the income). And the child is deprived of the fruitful hidden life that Mary and Joseph gave their Baby. He is forced to learn "social adjustment" (and to a very artificial society) at the age of one or two! Thus the whole family lives a life of such stern negation that if it were not so warping in practice and so inadequate in purpose, it might be looked upon as saintly.

It is good to know that there are families in the Lay Apostolate who are turning their backs on this futile pattern, who are going to the land and establishing small, Christian communities. Those of us who, for one reason or another, are unable to break away from the system, can at least put its relentless discipline to the best use by offering it up as a penance, and making our own quiet revolution within the walls of the City of Man.

Through the practice of Mary's most neglected virtues, modesty, humility, poverty, and silence, we can stage our small revolt on the modern perversion of woman's status. By seeking the will of God, as Christian wives, in the wishes of our husbands, and by teaching our children to do so, we can do much to restore the dignity and prestige of fatherhood. We can shut our eyes and ears to all the hollow substitutes the world offers to take the place of the living images of God we are privileged to bring into the world.

This business of "boring from within" is taking the hard way, for we will be surrounded by all manner of distractions and even specious arguments against our way of living. But the scales are still balanced heavily in our favor. To begin with, our children start out as saints. As each newly-baptized baby is put in our arms and we dote fatuously over every perfection in his soft little body, we know that God is embracing his perfect soul, arm with the life of the Holy Ghost. We know that He holds this soul so dear that He gave His Son as ransom for it. And as the child grows we can use the miraculous God-given instrument of his complete trust and confidence in us (the poor innocent thinks we're the most wonderful people in the world!) to turn his vision to the Source of his being. It is not so much a matter of what to do as it is a matter of disposition. If we are attuned

to His Purpose, we find Him everywhere, and pointing Him out to our children is a natural, unconscious gesture. And then follows the joy of seeing them finding Him for themselves, in the humble circumstances of every-day living. One little boy who was given sole responsibility for the care of a dog discovered His design even there. "Mommy, if we could love and obey God like my dog loves and obeys me, we'd all be saints, wouldn't we?"

The world has also invaded our schools. Education is an individual thing, and because it deals with individual souls it is intensely delicate. It has very little to do with the colossal phenomenon that exists in this country under its name—the mass-production mill through which all children, regardless of their talents, must be pushed, where the process consists in cramming their minds with unintegrated lumps of information, to be disgorged through the nerve-racking catharsis of periodic examinations, until the finished products emerge, like coins from a mint all bearing the same stamp. Real education is a process of unearthing, training, pruning, nursing, guiding and encouraging a working with God in the development of the whole person—mind and body, heart and soul. For this to be successful a personal rapport must be established between the teacher and his charge—a bond of charity approaching as nearly as possible that which existed between Christ and the Apostles. Our Lord limited his number to twelve, but fools rush in where angels fear to tread and we see poor, harassed teachers today confronted by seas of anonymous faces in classes of over sixty pupils. On top of this they have the problem of feeding them rush orders of intellectual pottage in whose concoction too many cooks have had a hand—the state, the churches, the trustees, the merchants, the social workers, and the psychologists—everyone, in fact, but those most concerned—the parents.

I am not disparaging the efforts of those noble and disinterested souls who, within the system, have devoted their entire lives, and are doing so today, to make learning available to all who can take it. We owe more than we can say to those priests and brothers and nuns and lay teachers who have kept moral values alive in the face of almost overwhelming odds. Handicapped as they have been by a distorted interest in temporal values, by political pressure for nationalistic propaganda, by the modern quackery that mistakes red tape for efficiency, expediency for principle, morbid curiosity for intellectual thirst, speed for progress, size for greatness, security for salvation, wealth for worth, and success for sanctity, and above all, by parental laissez-

faire, it is little short of a miracle that they have managed, as they have, to bring a number of souls closer to the Fountain of True Wisdom.

What I am trying to point out is that we, as parents, have failed in a task that is ours primarily, by nature, by inheritance and by principle. The school is but an extension of the parents' authority, their delegate in the instruction of their children. We have laid the entire burden of our responsibility upon the schools, and if they seem to be turning out lords of this world rather than heirs of the next, the brunt of the fault lies with us.

There was a time when one could train a youngster to fit into a niche in the world without doing violence to his conscience. This was a period when the Devil hid behind ostensible propriety and decency, biding his time, while little Pippa sang joyfully on her one day of freedom "God's in His Heaven—All's right with the world." But today the Devil has come out of hiding. Spreading his flaming pinions over the phosphorescent clouds of the world's confusion, he rejoices in his awful fascination, for his prizes are coveted and his power acknowledged openly.

God has given us a sure weapon with which to fight his triumph: the failure of the Cross. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?" While we teach this lesson to our children at home, let us humbly, penitently, beg that it be implemented by those who in all charity have denied themselves the joys of parenthood that they may be better able to help us further God's designs for our children.

ELAINE MALLEY

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### GRACIOUS LIVING

To educate your son and daughter,

To want the things they shouldn't oughter.



# Teaching Children to Pray

A joke currently booted about over the airways has to do with a small child saying her prayers and reaching, in the Our Father the place where she lisps innocently, "And lead us not into Penn Station." In fact, the general attitude towards children's prayer seems to be one of gentle amusement, with now and then a little tear-wiping on the side. A sentimental subject and a popular one with people who have their children pray. Strangely enough, a lot of people who never bother saying prayers themselves seem to feel that praying has a place in the young child's curriculum; that, for reasons very vague, it ought to be part of their early and most innocent years, along with fairies and Santa Claus and Nature Study and the rest.

Yet if there is a time for hard-headed approach to the problem of man's relation to God through prayer, the most perfect time is when the man is still a child. We lather the subject with sentiment and fail to see it in the light of cold logic. We quote glibly, "Unless you become as little children," and fail to see that in their very childhood, children are the most perfectly disposed to accept and understand God and that our job is not to marvel at the simplicity of their faith, the purity of their intentions, but to give them the means to remain as little children by training them in intelligent prayer.

Any prayer, if reverent and with good intention, is acceptable but how much time is lost and how many precious opportunities passed by for lack of training in prayer. In an age when so much thought is given to proper feeding, proper exercise, proper clothing, proper recreation, all with an eye to insuring the future adult against a variety of physical and social maladjustments, it is tragic that just a small fraction of that energy is applied to insuring against spiritual maladjustment. Why should it be that the majority of men pass from the age of childhood intimacy with God into a long period where the relationship is barely a nodding acquaintance, then find themselves jerked rudely to their knees in the face of some personal catastrophe and forced to seek Him out all over again in their maturity? And the second seeking out is burdened with guilt of conscience, timidity in the face of long neglect and an almost complete inability to strip the mind of a lifetime collection of impedimenta and return to that state of childlikeness where there exists only God and the man, Father and the child.

At the moment of Baptism the climate is perfect for the beginning of a relationship which could be perfect. The Holy Trinity takes residence in the pure tabernacle of the child's soul and he is at once launched upon his spiritual life. A woman once asked the nurse in the delivery room of a Catholic hospital, as she watched her new-born son trundled out to the nursery, "Please say an Ave right now that he will never commit a mortal sin." And the nurse, startled, replied, "Say, that's an idea!" Saint Paul says we are called to be saints. The calling becomes a vocation as soon as the child is born. But the problem is not fundamentally the parents'. The business of being a saint, or trying to be one, is always an affair between the single soul and God. The terrible responsibility of the parents lies in their duty to make known the calling to the child, to start him as soon as possible on his journey to God through a lifetime, then through death into eternity. And the first and final steps are through intimacy with God in prayer.

The Sacraments are all-important, of course, but the Sacraments are God coming to us and the reception of them does not necessarily guarantee that we will be saints. For two people to get anywhere with a project both must cooperate, and when one produces the means only to have the other refuse to use them, the project is doomed to end, at best, in mediocrity—even when the first party is God. All we can do for God can be gathered under one label: Prayer. It covers not only the act of praying but all our work, all joy, all sorrow, in fact all our activities, provided they are good ones, if we wish to offer them. The joke of it all is that the end of our giving is in order that He may give to us. So if we are going to run this race as though there were only a single prize, an early start is certainly an advantage. And if we are raising children to win the same prize, of all the provisions we must make for them certainly an understanding in the use of prayer is at the top of the list. It would be sensible, then, to establish a pattern of prayer for our children which would serve them without deviation, regardless of the particular circumstances they will meet, during an entire lifetime.

Too many people underestimate the ability of children to grasp spiritual truths, yet they will quote innumerable profound remarks their children make and sit back in a puddle of tenderness to contemplate them. It shouldn't be surprising that children make profound spiritual observations: their souls are pure, filled with the Holy Trinity and the flow of divine grace into them is unimpeded. Granted their mental faculties are not fully trained

at the age of four or five, but the relation to God does not depend on the number of hours per week spent in advanced nursery school, or the I. Q. rating, or the quantity of educational toys provided. And just because a poetic adult can contemplate God in the mystery of a blaze of grass or the flight of a bird does not mean that the child's awareness of God in these same things is any less intelligent. With the child it is not an intellectual triumph that he sees the proof of God's omnipotence in all the things around him; it is a simple, straightforward fact, which is the fruit of the divine gift of faith in a soul filled with grace. Therefore, if we are wise, we will seize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and with the help of God's grace, try to equip our children with an approach to Him which will save them years of half-hearted, aimless effort.

We see, in the light of the various facets of our relationship to God, that we must address Him in a variety of roles: as the child of an all-loving Father, as sinner to Redeemer, as petitioner to the Giver of all things and as grateful recipient of blessings in abundance. Christ pointed this out in the Our Father and the same variety of approaches to God are evident in the Mass. Children, at quite an early age, are able to memorize the Our Father and the Hail Mary but the chances of teaching the meanings of these prayers to any but those with unusual intelligence are remote. However, it is possible to use the general pattern of these prayers and give them a means of conversing with God which will include all the important points and still make sense.

The start is a salutation, of course, whatever form of addressing God is most natural. Then because getting one's sins off one's chest at the very first seems to leave the air purer and the soul freer to enjoy this conversation with God, examen comes next. It is important that the child be left to drag out his little aberrations of his own free will, and don't think they won't remember or they won't admit them. If the parents will make it clear in the beginning that the business of sinning is an affair between the child and God, and not an offense against the parent, it gives them the assurance that revelations in an examen are not going to be interrupted by remonstrances from mother or father. More often than not, a lot of minor mysteries will be cleared up at the nightly examen (for instance, which of our children was pulling the buds off the chrysanthemums—they were locked in mutual and honorable silence when questioned in a group). Then comes contrition, "I am sorry, Blessed Jesus, and *please help me* not to do it again." And right here pre-schoolers can learn that goodness is something



which comes with God's grace and without His help they are apt to do it again and again and again. Some days, of course, are very good days, and the immediate reaction at night prayers is to announce loudly, "I was very good today, God." On days like this, they can say "If I did anything to offend you today, I am sorry. I tried very hard to be good." And they are learning to guard against presumption.

Next, petitions. All the "God bless Daddy and help him with his work; God bless Mommy . . ." and etc., fit in here. And after the most intimate associates are included, some under the heading "all my family and friends" for the sake of brevity, they learn very easily to include "all the souls in Purgatory, everyone who has been so good to us, everyone in the world and please help the Russian people find God." This latter petition is apt to prompt some interesting discussion and some fabulous conclusions. Jamie announced one night, "I know why the Russian people can't find God. Because He's in our house."

Then comes one of the most important petitions of all. "Please help us all to be saints." To be a saint looks like a fairly easy job to a child, and they have a natural desire to be saints. Only the adult appreciates how hard it is and, looking back, wishes with all his heart he had thought of asking for the necessary graces every day of his life. We can train our children to—why don't we?

After this comes the break between the affairs of the world and this affair of the heart. "I love you, Blessed Jesus, and I love your Blessed Mother. And I thank You for. . . ." each night a different blessing. The assortment of blessings and pleasures is legion and will include tractors and trucks and ducks and dessert and even, in the case of one of ours, "Thank you for not letting any motorcycles come in our driveway."

Prayers are over and all that is left is tucking in. But with tucking in comes the opportunity to plant a seed that will bear fruit very early in the formation of the habit of meditation, even though the child knows it, not as meditation, but simply as a kind of game called "thinking about." The choice of subjects for thinking about is limitless, but just for the sake of example: "Now before you fall asleep, you think about Baby Jesus and how He was just the same size as our Peter, just as sweet and funny, and how beautiful His Mother was. And you think of what it was like there in the barn where He was born, with only Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph and the cow and the donkey to love Him." It is particularly helpful to remind children that Jesus was just the

same size as Peter at infancy, and the size of Jamie at four, and the same size as Monica at five, and so on; that He ate three meals a day, and helped His Mother with the dishes, probably, and probably had a cat to feed, and a garden to weed. There are lots of games for children to play which are in reality exercises in meditation. "Looking at the things that God made," is one which helps tremendously to increase their awareness of the vastness of His creation, yet makes the universe a rather snug place because on all sides they find it is filled with things He put there.

Children have such simple faith in the efficacy of prayer that it is easy for them to form the habit of praying on all sorts of occasions, occasions of minor crises during the day when affairs have progressed so far out of reach that it becomes quite obvious it is time to turn them over to God. They will voice their prayer aloud, matter of factly, and with the simplicity of the faith that is as a grain of mustard, they wait for the mountain to be moved. One spring day our boys discovered the top to the oil tank was unfastened and dropped two or three dozen rocks into the pipe leading to the tank. I froze, then collected myself enough to attack the delicate job of fishing out the rocks with an old fly swatter handle. They squatted around, very tense, and silent except for an occasional "Please, Saint Philomena, help mommy to get the rocks out of the pipe." Of course she did. Yet our children are not particularly "pious" types. Nor do we stand around and prompt them. It is very easy to plant the habit, and their world is so much more secure, because of this faith that God is ready and willing to help them on every hand, that calling on Him is second nature to them. I might say, also, that there have been times when some of our cynical and worldly-wise friends have been more stunned and edified by just such calling upon Heaven by the children, in the middle of an ordinary conversation, than they would be if pinned down for an hour's bombardment with learned texts by a zealous adult.

Add to these two other forms of prayer, and the child is equipped to "pray always." First, they love learning that work can be offered as prayer, and secondly, they adapt themselves quickly to the notion that suffering is a form of prayer.

Monica, at the age of four and a half, finished her after-dinner chore one night and went into the den to see how Jamie was coming along with his. Returning, she shook her head sadly and sighed. "Well, I guess the only people in this house who want to go to Heaven are Mommy and Daddy and me. Jamie just *won't* pick up the den and offer it up." And we have a small John who,

at two and a half, will come wailing to the house with a stubbed toe or a scraped knee and as the offended part is washed at the kitchen sink, looks up at the Crucifix over the sink and snuffles, "For you, God, for you."

At about five, most children can understand the Our Father and the Hail Mary, so we have incorporated them into the nightly prayers of the oldest, along with the Gloria and several personal remarks addressed to her favorite saints. At mealtime they say, "Whether we eat or sleep, whether we work or play, let it all be for the honor and glory of God." And after the meal they simply say, "Thank you, Blessed Jesus, for the lovely lunch," and ask to be excused. Grace at table, of course, can be just about any form of address that appeals and serves its proper purpose, as long as there is some form of address used.

The morning offering is usually short, "I offer you this day as a prayer of love and thanksgiving, and I thank you for keeping me safely through the night." The "safely through the night" is not meant to imply, of course, that to die during the night would be the horror of horrors. I have heard too many Catholic mothers say, "My child says 'Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep,' but we leave out the 'if I should die before I wake' because I don't want my baby going to sleep with death on his mind." Of all the stages a man goes through, he has the least fear of death when he is a small child. Before he is filled with all the morbid notions adults entertain about death, death is a magical gate that leads to God and Heaven and Heaven, of course, is wonderful. So it makes sense to a small child to be told, if he should ask, that dying in the night would be an elegant event because with God living right in his soul, it is certain he would be zipped right up to Heaven. If, however, he finds he did not die during the night, then it is quite obvious that God has work for him to do and he will thank God for keeping him to do this special work.

These prayers, which take up much more space in the writing than in the saying, cover their entire day from morning until night and they are set in a pattern which fits maturity as well as childhood. It gives them a sense of purpose in their conversations with God, supplies them with a motive for work well-done and suffering accepted, and the whole is geared to the common vocation of us, "who are called to be saints."

MARY REED NEWLAND





"COME HERE JUNIOR, AND



**AD ABOUT THE SAINTS!"**

# The Love-Education of Girls

*From my own errors I have plucked one fruit; that is measureless pity . . . for adolescents. For in our own time their education is so little cared for that young people seem to have no greater enemies than their own parents and teachers. These are people who in a hundred miserable ways deprave generous youth. Not only do they lead them away from piety and study, but teach them to live in pride and luxury and lasciviousness. O Lord, the eyes, not only of these blind parents and teachers, but of the stupid ones also! . . .*

Saint Peter Canisius wrote these ardent words of accusation in the sixteenth century. They are even more applicable to the great majority of persons responsible for the upbringing of children. The word "upbringing" is, however, a misnomer for the process to which our young are subjected. They are brought up so much as brought low, not assisted in seeking the entelechy, but abetted rather in their own undoing.

Education has increased in volume as it has decreased in quality. Our children are being consciously educated in their cradles; their very toys are educational, with an almost doctrinal gravity. What is the purpose of all this education? At what do parents and teachers aim? Few would dare maintain, in a nominally Christian or only nominally Christian society like ours, that our children are being educated toward membership in the kingdom of heaven. There survives as yet enough humanitarian liberalism for many people to believe that children are being educated toward useful membership in society. How unsubstantiated is this belief if anyone knows who has watched the rise of youthful delinquency and the flood of unhappy marriages. If the large majority of parents, however, were to analyze their motives, they would have to acknowledge—what some openly admit—that they are educating their children to get on in the world. The gospel of success, the virtue of ambition, a knowledge of practical values, conscious or unconsciously form the basis of most modern education. "What does the world offer? Only gratification of corrupt nature, gratification of the eye, the empty pomp of living." And the education of Catholic children which should be unshakeably set against "these things that take their being from the world, not from the Father" is deeply corrupted by them. For what must be said of parents and teachers in general must—as were the words of Peter Canisius—be said of Catholic parents and teachers in particular. They are by far the more seriously to blame, for "they have



of ignorance to cover their sins" of omission and commission. It is true especially of those in the wealthier layers of society, they seek the most earnestly to conform with the standards of the world. In the effort to end for their children the rebuffs and humiliations which a low financial status had in this country so long imposed on them, most of our enriched Catholics dress their children as grotesquely, feed them as foolishly, entertain them as ostentatiously, and altogether educate them as fashionably as their non-Catholic neighbors. Soon they are indeed as indistinguishable from these as their fond parents could desire; fond parents who forget how little this protective coloring will serve to protect them on the ultimate day. Let us examine some of the steps leading to this lamentable end. For present purposes I shall study but one aspect of education, the love-education of girls, not only because it is important but because laboratory conditions make it easy.

In the playpen parents and friends suggest the "boy-meets-girl" situation. At kindergarten mothers laughingly refer to every boy as a potential "boy friend." The infant does not see the difference but hears the emphasis and begins to divide her playmates according to sex rather than to affinity. Modern psychologists have furnished solid evidence of what the old ascetics taught, that the innocence of childhood is a figment of forgetful minds. Boswell in his treatise on concupiscence and Freud in his analysis of childhood sexuality recognize this equally, and, though the hope of the one is founded in grace and the optimism of the other in psychoanalysis, both see the necessity to redress nature by education. What parents are doing, however, is not only to follow nature's lead, no matter how crooked, but to make smooth her paths, removing every obstacle upon her way. In their mental confusion they talk of Freud but believe in Rousseau. They people the world with complexes and fixations, with traumas and inhibitions, yet they treat their children as noble savages who can think no wrong. The babies are given some physical training, a little intellectual instruction, and left with no moral direction at all.

Meanwhile our little girl, in preparation for her diversified career as (1) a Popular Girl and (2) an American Wife and Mother, is given to understand that the universe revolves around herself. She is trained to keep her hair curled and wear frills around her bare midriff. (These were designed for her elders in the movies, with the same purpose as the cutlet-frills of former times, to make the morsel they surround appear more toothsome and the whole easier to handle.) When, by dressing her like a frivolous girl she has been given the idea that she should

act like one, she naturally tries her best to do so. She begins to imitate the women she sees photographed everywhere or read of in magazines. Their smiles are so radiant, their lives so gloriously told, that obviously they must possess the secret of happiness. This, she soon finds, from every ad, is an open secret and its name is *love*; a special love that has clearly nothing to do with the love the people in her orbit seem to experience but for which all the older girls are searching. She longs to discover this wonderful thing, attainable, curiously enough, only by an elaborate process which includes the conscientious use of various makeups, perfumes, garments, toothpastes and deodorants. She no longer enjoys her childhood but has a single-minded ambition to leave it behind as quickly as may be. Her greatest suffering is to be pulled back from entering the enchanted land of the grown-ups, where, alone, she has read, love is to be found. Meanwhile she has been told at school some interesting but remote facts about the secret ways of bees and birds which appear to have no relation to her own life. She probably has heard a few equally unrelated facts and legends about human sexuality from one of her contemporaries. Her mother has perhaps given her some information regarding the birth of babies which the child tucks away for reference in some unreal other world: her distant future. All this has nothing to do with her present life which flows on in its undirected sea for the much more convincing and immediate thing called *love*. All the things she has been told, all this physiological information is of not much use to her, for it is still outside the realm of her experience. The one thing that is not outside her scope is love in its spiritual aspect, and that is the one thing she does not hear about. She is told nothing of the Cause of love: "He Who first created love," and so drifts on always further from her aim.

She wishes, therefore, to grow up and tries to do so by imitating not so much the flesh and blood grownups around her, but the paper ones who are around her just as much. She sees only the pleasures of being adult, and none of the pains and obligations and responsibilities because most of the adults behave as if they had none. Since full-grown people dress and act like adolescents, why should children not do so? Some parents have misgivings and try to forbid this or that aping of their ways, but soon give up when they find their children secretly moping or openly rebellious. The papers some weeks ago published an interview with the wife of a political personage. She explained that her eleven-year-old daughter was permitted no grownup privilege until she could show that a majority of her classmates enjoyed it. She

is conquered the right to paint her nails and was looking forward to the day when she could use lipstick. The well-meaning parents' desire for their child's happiness had evidently kept them from following this principle to its logical and bitter end. If the majority creates rightness and if most people eat human flesh, then it is fine to be cannibals. This majority-mania is a caricature of democratic theory and, if followed far enough, may extinguish liberty.

"But we don't want our child to be different," parents will say. "We want her to be happy. Being different hurts. . . ." What they are really doing is not only preventing her from being hurt but from being happy by training her to exist on a level where she must feel as little as she possibly can. They do not want her to be capable of loving deeply or of making sacrifices, but they want her to be loved deeply and able to induce the sacrifices of others. In a word, they want her to be "popular." Popularity is the criterion by which everything is to be judged, the end to which everything tends, and for which real sacrifices are often made. To be popular the child must not be different, she must not be choosy about her friends, she must be ready always to join them in their fun." One of the amusements the parents often suggest is kissing games. A very devout and well-educated Catholic mother recently assured me once that kissing games are "good fun." If the twelve-year-old finds no pleasure in a kiss there is no point in kissing. If she finds pleasure in it, no precedent could be more dangerous. I have seen charming, cultured women at dances for their fourteen-year-old children turn off the lights and heard them squeal when the tactless father switched them on, "Poor dears, let them have fun a little longer." Many parents think all this quite useful training for the business of dating so soon to begin. These games and parties help to overcome the natural distaste of the young for the caresses of strangers. They help in breaking down the instinctive desire to be inviolate, a desire as deep as its opposite, but not eventually as powerful. The psychology of yesteryear—which still holds the popular field—erred in believing chastity to be unnatural. Chastity is the natural atmosphere of human love, the essential element in which love lives, its necessary condition. In chastity is unnatural for it injures sensibility ("petrifies the feeling," as Burns admitted) and thus reduces the chances for happy love. But parents whose conception of love is radically antiquated can only see their child's happiness in conforming with social usage. They have kept a single standard in the confusion of these years: that physical virginity is desirable for their daughter.



ters. Short of that they either close their eyes, hoping for the least possible promiscuity, or else cheerfully permit it as the natural right of youth. There has grown up as strong a convention of promiscuity as there formerly was a convention of chastity. The Society urges what it once forbade; and urges it for no fruitful purpose but as an end in itself. This preoccupation of our society with sexual things may be a symptom of infantilism or a sign of senility, but it is a certain indication of impotence. All things are approached from a single angle. Advertising is one long aphrodisiac designed to end in an orgasm of buying. Not conception but consumption is the fruit of our caresses.

Thus with minds conditioned by conversation since infancy and bodies conditioned before puberty by haphazard contacts, our children are prepared for the indiscriminate intimacies of the dating period. The sterility of this form of sexual experimentation has been pointed out by sociologists who have proved that dating does not lead to mating. Dating is, as we have said, a sport rather than a part of courtship. It is more often, in the girls' case, a product of vanity than of sensuality, though it eventually comes to include the latter.

A Catholic girl of my acquaintance tells how she and a friend, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, went out on their first date with two fellow students from the parish school. When the moment for serious kissing drew near the girls got panicky and blurted out as an excuse that they were both going to become nuns. They were "dropped cold" then and there, and for months, she said, not a single boy spoke to them. Terrified by this ostracism they determined to re-enter the normal school world again, and once they succeeded by doing more than they had in the first instance avoided.

A Catholic psychiatrist tells me that she was consulted by one of her relatives who with evident anxiety confided that her daughter was not a "success," that she had once been asked down to a nationally popular "hop" and had never been asked again while all her cousins were regularly invited. The psychiatrist, feeling that this was not a "case," made tactful inquiries of the girl's friends and drew the following reply: "Oh, poor D—! She just hates being pawed. She can't help it. But of course the boys think she's a Lesbian and so they don't ask her down."

These cases are not so very exceptional. Often the necessary routine of necking is secretly distasteful to one or both parties, but such is the force of convention that they submit to it smilingly. She cannot offend him who pays (often at a great sacrifice)

at dinner, by withholding what he has been taught to expect; he cannot slight her by failing to demand what she has learned to love. The formality which rules each phase of these encounters, from the first flower to the last farewell, is so rigid that beside it Post's etiquette appears bohemian. The strict pairing off at young people's meetings, the unwritten game laws so sportingly served with regard to each other's dates, prevent any general change of ideas, any true conversation, let alone any comradeship from developing between those who are not dates. And between the dates themselves there is the convention of a spontaneity so artificial that true expression of feeling is banished and it is a great wonder that genuine love sometimes comes to life in spite of all.

Social convention, the desire for popularity, the fear of being different, do not succeed, however, in altogether blocking the Catholic girl's horizon. The religious instruction she has not even been able to avoid has opened some chinks through which misgivings creep in. If she is at college she will find these doubts about the rightness of playing with the power and the privileges of love reinforced by some of the more intelligent and outspoken students. A very holy nun said to me once, emphatically tossing her veiled head, "Why we here in our cloisters know more about love, and I mean human love, than most of these girls who play at it for years and never learn a thing about it, nor to value its work."

The Catholic college girl will find plenty of teachers who believe that "their" girls would never do anything wrong. If pressed, they would agree that perhaps a goodnight peck-on-the-cheek was exchanged at the door, but no more, and they do not seem to see the superfluity of that. They listen sympathetically to the girls' descriptions of their dates and patiently admire the dresses they will wear to their next meetings. These painstaking adults no doubt believe that this is a part of being "all things unto all men."

The girl will find others who, instead of teaching a healthy contempt for the ways of the world, a cheerful independence of outside opinion, and the unconventionality which is the heritage of the saints, never tire of repeating: "Don't be different. Try to adapt yourself. Do like the others in your class." These women would be deeply shocked if they knew to what activities their lessons in conformism were being applied by their preconditioned pupils.

If the college girl finds most parents and teachers closing their eyes to her problems, she finds other adults offering tacit

complicity. One girl (known at her non-Catholic college as "Icebox" because she does not kiss) mentioned to the woman doctor during a routine medical examination that she was having trouble with her gums, and received this reply: "How many boyfriends did you kiss last week? One of them must have had a trenchmouth. . . ." Another girl asked the fashionable doctor who was giving her shots for anemia whether the latter might be causing delay in menstruation. Without so much as an examination the doctor assured her there could be only one cause (sin), pregnancy, and added that although he did not approve of the ways of college girls she must not hesitate to consult him, etc. This taking unchastity for granted gradually breaks down the resistance of the mind and accustoms it to accept any impurity.

Confessors in colleges are to be pitied. How far to go in the condemnation of evil without risking the loss of influence and excessive severity is their painful problem. Their every reluctant concession is brandished as a permission. Confessors have been known to grow popular overnight thanks to a phrase capable of a "wide" interpretation. There are clerics who pride themselves on "frankly facing the situation," and they are much in demand as lecturers. A particularly popular one has tried to delimit the dangers of petting by dividing the process into a system of "zones," some of which are dangerous, he warns, and must not be entered until shortly before marriage. His elaborate instructions, given in all good faith before the tabernacle of the Lord, are thirstily listened to by girls seeking authority for their actions. They leave the triumphant topographers of sin, who know just to what point they may go, and refuse to realize that unless they wish to go beyond they had better not enter these zones at all.

If we agree—and as Catholics we must agree—that promiscuous caressing is an inordinate use of a God-given faculty, then we cannot "let it go," we are under the obligation to fight it. Yet how can we hope to do so successfully at this eleventh hour? We clearly cannot "fight it." It is the children themselves who must fight this battle. The parents and teachers who were the accessories or their accomplices must become their new allies. Let us look at the means.

In chastity as in all things education must be positive. We cannot expect children to value something they have never heard of. We dare not mention chastity, but dare to let them grow up unchaste. We must encourage the sense of inviolability that the Creator has put in them, cultivate in them a vivid knowledge that



ny belong body and soul not to Tom, Dick and Harry but to  
m.

In their friendships they must learn to keep true charity. Although every soul is to be loved "even as ourselves," yet they will find themselves loving some better than others, playing and talking more happily with them, not for any external reason of sex or wealth or beauty but because of an inner compatibility given them by God. If there were more discriminating and articulate friendships there would be fewer confused and unhappy marriages.

We have found that in many cases it is not their senses which lead girls into promiscuity, but their vanity. From earliest childhood we should have been helping our children to overcome this evidence of human failings. If they were trained in simplicity, taught to deflate their own vanity, girls would not go on dates as they were collecting scalps. They would want to go out alone only with tried and trusted friends. Their common interests would make conversation so abundant that no kissing would be needed as a substitute.

In most cases, however, we will find that sensuality does play a part and a very important one, in these encounters. This is only natural since God gave us our senses. Since He gave them to us for definite purposes, and since they are by their very nature more immediately compelling than our reason, not only must we enlighten children's minds as to their purpose, but it is normally prudent to avoid exciting their senses and to teach them to avoid doing so.

All this is needful and all this is nothing. For we cannot overcome passion with reason. We can only overcome passion with a stronger passion. We sometimes see an intellectual passion overcome sensuality with an arid austerity of its own. But the only sound conquest of an essentially fruitful passion such as physical love is by one yet more fecund. Otherwise there is a life of frustrated life, a search for being, impossible to fill. There is only one love large enough to fill that need. We must awaken children the fire of the love of God. Not a vague, sentimental ardor for "Jesus mild," but the "love which is as strong as death." As Father Francois Charnot says, "Let us tell children from the outset that the source of human love is in God, as is the source of all love. Let us tell them early by example as well as by word that all love must be ordered to divine ends. We hear much of 'sublimating love.' To sublimate is to draw purity from impurity. We have in the corporal phenomena of love a part

only, though indeed a true one, of the elements which compose the total synthesis which is love. In it are contained elements in a spiritual order, even before any sublimation is attempted. Love has been made in the image and likeness of the Holy Spirit.

We will therefore help children to acquire chastity and charity and humility and simple prudence. We will teach them the Beginning and the End of love, and the human love which is only a part of the whole and explain to them its ordered relation. But chiefly we will try with the grace of God to awaken in them the flame of His love which will show them all the things better than we can do and which alone can save them from the heat of temptation. "The only hope, or else despair, lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—to be redeemed from fire by fire. And we can only hope to make them believe us when we tell them this if we ourselves are truly changed, ready to be born again.

MARION MITCHELL STANCIOFF

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### NOT A MOVEMENT—AN EPIDEMIC

Saints are not made

By constant persuasion,

They only evolve

Through holy contagion.

# The Child from One to Heaven

The art of raising Christians requires a deft ability to coordinate and inspire the ordinary techniques of good child care with single motive: the love and service of God. The secret of this is simple but not easy: to raise Christian children, you must be a Christian yourself.

To be Christian is to extend in time the life and work of our Lord by loving God, living in grace and serving others. This has never been easy. In monasteries it has never been easy. In family life it is less easy. It is even harder in a decaying and secular society like ours.

To be a Christian parent is harder yet. The family is a group organism. Its growth demands the continual subjugation of the individuals comprising it, lest the interplay of personalities make the home a battlefield. Thus it must often seem that those practices and preoccupations which for the individual prepare the way of perfection, the ascent to Mount Carmel—solitude, recollection, formal prayer—are submerged when one becomes a parent in the flood of trifling, mundane concerns which characterize the group life. Sometimes years of resentment must be borne before parents come to see that this perpetual self-sacrifice, far from smothering their souls, has softened their egotistic bent for personal spiritual success with those traits of abandon, suppleness, circumstance and dependence on the Will of God which are the mark of truly Christian souls. Parenthood requires a constant preoccupation with the physical needs of one's family and therefore a stake in the things of this world. To organize efficiently the minutiae of daily life and yet keep alive the love of each member of the family for the others and of all for God is indeed a difficult task.

There are many ministries. Preachers en flesh the Word in sermons that quicken us to faith. Philosophers enshrine the Word in crystal thought which error cannot cloud. Saints materialize the Word in heroic action. Priests substantiate the Word as none of us can by changing bread to Christ.

But parents can make the Word flesh in a unique and almost universal sense. From the moment they conceive a child until his last work of degrading or ennobling the world is done, the work of their hands and hearts can incarnate the Word as can no other ministry.

Therefore must parents live in grace, lest their ministry be defamed.



It is so easy for them to be wrong, to misconstrue the relation of religion to life. They can drift into thinking of religion as a decoration, a cultural flourish to be added to "the American way," or as a substitute for life, a drug to enmesh in rosy vagueness the harsh outlines of a wicked world.

Parents who mistake Christianity for a social grace bring up cynical and secular children who lead shallow, undisciplined lives cluttered with movies, candy, cereal boxtops and comic books. The failure of these parents is not always recognized. They are reasonable people, a credit to the town, good friends and neighbors. It is not noticed that they are not Christians.

Parents who seek "comfort" in religion are more readily detected as maladjusted. Christianity afflicts these people like a disease. They are full of tracts and medals and esoteric devotion to unknown saints. They entertain the clergy often and at times butter their conversation with private understandings with the Blessed Mother and churchly chitchat about Father James getting Good Shepherd parish after all.

Such people seldom concern themselves with the mere natural aids to parenthood, like the PTA or parents' magazines or the Montessori system. Teaching Tommy to use simple tools or working out a schedule of chores and allowances for him is less important to them than seeing that Tommy wears a scapular.

Such parents lack a sense of proportion. They are somewhat silly. But they are less reprehensible than the middle-class type. They do realize that there is a dog beneath the skin and that the natural order is not to be complacently accepted as it is.

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How do parents who love God and live in grace and have got straight the connection between religion and life approach the task of raising Christians?

They begin with a study of sound child care. They know that the liturgical life is neither a substitute for the world nor an endorsement of it: it is a *critique*. They use the love of God as a touchstone, a divining rod by which to select and transform the things in the natural order which can honor Him. Therefore they use the ordinary means of learning how to bring up children. They have no facetious attitude toward government pamphlets like *The Child From One to Six* or nursery clinics or books of child welfare. They use these aids with discretion, but their approach is careful rather than critical. They have much to learn.

Wise parents begin early to inculcate self-reliance. They allow the walking child to fall down without comforting him.

let him cry a little if he cannot assemble his blocks to his satisfaction. Occasionally they encourage him with a word or smile. But as a matter of course, the child is expected to work things out for himself. In doing so, he is strengthened spiritually. Can a Christian be chicken-hearted? Is virtue a valentine of pink and baby talk?

Self-reliance can be overlearned. The child trying to walk through gravel sand wants to try it all the time, through naps and meals and other needs. It is here, before the child is one, that wise parents teach a reasonable respect for authority, for Mother's quiet firmness, for Father's silent look. They do not call out at the child's cry or give in to his whims. They show their dignity by self-control and sensible consistency. The infant learns that No means No. There is no contest of wills, no testing of the strength of No. Mother said "No" or "Bed" or "Give it to me." That is all. It is final, inevitable. When the child is twenty and Mother says, "I want to talk to you, Tom," Tom will come. Mother is probably right. In any event, she is Mother. If Tom gets it into his head to chase women or drink liquor or do any of the things that young people think makes them a real guy, Father can call Tom aside and talk sense to him. But only because the event was prepared for by the playpen and the sandbox.

Thus good Christian parents develop the child from one age to the next. As he grows older, physical problems diminish, moral and spiritual ones increase. Less time is needed for physical problems like bathroom training or throwing a ball or sewing a sock. More time is given to discussion of the ethical situations arising at school, of the nature of the earth and the universe, of basic religious concepts, prayer, faith, grace. But there is no separation between physical and spiritual. When Father shows Tommy how to swing a bat, he may slip in a word about the place of play in the life of Christ. Tommy will not pay attention, of course, if he is any kind of a boy. He is too interested in learning the game, in hitting home runs. But there will be hundreds of similar opportunities for Father to make his point. An occasion will present itself to tell the story of the child saint who was playing

He was asked what he would do if he had five minutes to himself. He replied that he would go right on playing ball. Tommy unconsciously dovetail this with the other things Father has said. When Tommy is older he will understand the relation of play to sanctity without knowing how he knows.

Mother is teaching the girls to bake. Little Joan is in tears because her cookies turned out badly. Did you read the recipe carefully,

dear? Yes, Mommy—but it seemed like such an awful loss of sugar, I just thought . . . Mother makes a few, casual remarks about the value of following rules, of paying attention to details. The mailman arrives with a package. It is a beautiful blanket for the new baby. The girls interrupt their cooking to admire the gift. Mother smiles as she reads a motto on the label: "Quality is never an accident." What is quality, Mommy? Mother explains. She relates the principle to Joan's cookies. Joan is beginning to learn a lot more than just making cookies. . . .

But this moralizing in situations will seem false and will not be accepted by the children unless, from their birth, they are brought up in a home that radiates affection, idealism and a common life of grace. The infant in his highchair cannot talk, but he watches his parents pray before meals. He wonders what they are doing. Later he imitates the position of the hands. It doesn't matter that he doesn't know what he is doing. It matters only that prayers are as much a staple of existence as diaper and oatmeal.

The Germans have an expression for this principle. They say, "He does not know the words, but he understands the meaning." That is, the child grasps in an intuitive way many attitudes and meanings. Wise parents utilize this principle in teaching everything. They listen to music and read poems and look at sunsets and pray at Mass, and the child understands only the music. Later he will learn the words more rationally. But if there has been no music first, the child rightly suspects that what he is being taught is affectations, not lived out, said for his benefit. Consequently he learns unwillingly and superficially. He does not learn by the blood but by the tongue. And he forgets as soon as he gets away with it—which is often tomorrow. If a child is taught grace before meals at catechism and notices his parents suddenly saying grace before meals with self-conscious airs of piety and talking about being a little soldier of Christ, he senses the insincerity of his parents and is led to believe that the whole rigmarole is a gag to fool little kids into being good.

Sincere Christian parents do not produce this reaction. Their children cannot remember a time when Mother and Father were not going to daily Mass or reading spiritual books to each other or discussing current events in the light of Our Lord's teaching. When children grow older and study religion formally, they see they are merely receiving explicit instruction in the facts and attitudes they have always lived by.



Even after catechetical age, the greater part of the children's moral instruction goes on at home. Public affairs, heard on the radio and discussed at school, are rehashed at home. What is Communism? Why are they after Cardinal Mindszenty? Why do they want to stamp out religion? A Maryknoll magazine arrives.

It features a full-page photo of a ragged Chinese peasant crouching on the ground, crying like a baby in despair and grief. His horse stands beside him. There is nothing to eat. Nothing to drink. The picture is tacked up on the family bulletin board in the kitchen. The children ask about it. It is explained to them. We should pray for the poor and hungry. Why we should treasure our own good food with thankfulness. A copy of *Life* magazine lies on the living-room table. Mother fetches it, turns to the section: "*Life Goes To A Party.*" She shows the children pictures of the well-dressed guests, stuffing themselves with delicacies, laughing too much and doing foolish things. She compares them with the Chinese peasant. Is this right? Is it Christian?

Needless to say, wise parents do not sicken their young with an overdose of piety. They take the attitude that God made the world and it is fundamentally good. They inculcate a "relaxed" Christianity which presumes a Christian viewpoint without tiresomely insisting on it all day long. It is not necessary to evoke the saints or to collect holy pictures, to deck oneself out in the paraphernalia of piety. To follow Christ is to love God and to do good for His sake—that is enough. God is everywhere: parents need not feel that He can only exist in virtue of their continually planting Him about.

Christian parents, therefore, explain natural and mechanical phenomena reasonably. They discuss the anatomy of rainbows, how radios work, the hydrologic cycle and how babies are born, in a matter-of-fact way, using such aids in the way of blackboards and encyclopedias as they can afford. They are careful, however, to avoid the scientific spirit. The explanation of ant-hills and the life of bees is complete only when it directs the attention of the child to the wisdom and humor and engineering skill of God. Yet the spiritual aspect of material things is shown with such a fine sense of proportion that the children are able to talk freely of things that interest them—frogs and hockey and what Natalie Wood did in school—without fearing that the conversation will inevitably veer around to the ten commandments.

As the child enters puberty, all that has gone into his formation is put to a crucial test. The contrast between the ethical

pattern by which he has been brought up and the cynical va of the "outside" world becomes more and more obvious. goes to school, visits the homes of his companions, sees advertisements and billboards and hears the radio, and everything he and sees and hears shows him plainly that while the rest of world is "having fun," he is restricted in a thousand ways by dictates of religion. He has been led to believe that kindness, gentility and love of one's neighbor are natural and expected virtues, and he has behaved accordingly. Now he is called "sucker." And as he looks at his friends with their pockets full of coins, their movies and soda pop and comic books, he wonders if he is one. His friends don't do chores or go to daily Mass. They can see "Neptune's Daughter." He is not allowed. Why not? Is he being taken in? Is Catholicism real? Or are the values of the world around him "real"?

Many children are lost forever to their parents at this time. The instinct of the child is to pull away from his elders, to become emotionally independent. It is psychologically necessary for him to do so. If the attitude of his parents is sympathetic and honest, he is enabled to detach himself from them emotionally without rejecting their spiritual pattern. If his training till now has been Christian, his struggle for personal identity will not unduly alienate his parents. They will not try to fetter him with idiotic demands for affection and blind obedience. They are confident they can hold him with the silken threads of love and respect for their own example—threads which have an elasticity, which give but do not snap, struggle though he may. Let him thrash his wings a bit.

Thus wise parents handle this fight for identity, this youthful war on the outcome of which depends the success of all their efforts, with tactful understanding. They adjust themselves to a granting of concessions, a paying out of slack in the silver line. But this is never done on a bargaining basis: you do this and I let you do that. The loosening of the ties that bind presumes an idea of equity—adult behavior meriting adult privilege. And in keeping with this, the conflict between the child's two worlds, home and his outside experience, is honestly faced.

There *is* a difference between life in a Christian family and the pleasure-seeking existence which is the "American way." Our neighbors do things which we may not do. There are things our secular friends see and say and think which we may not, and we be Christians. This does not mean that our friends are not worthy people, better perhaps by their lights than we by ours. But they live differently than we do, and the difference is important.

Christian parents gain nothing by glossing the facts, by narrowing the chasm between the following of Christ and the following of self, as though secularism could be sanctified and Christianity "humanized" and the two somehow be made to appear the same. They are not. And the time has come for a frank appeal to the child to embrace the life of grace and reject the life of self-seeking, knowing the implications of both.

Wise parents give this appeal a positive statement by stimulating a sense of vocation. They teach their children the use of the Missal and a real participation in the liturgy of the Church. They develop an understanding of the Mystical Body, a sense of living the life of Christ by extension in time. The saints are introduced as models of behavior. Their achievements are studied in preparation for feast-days and name-days, first in the little introductions in the Missal, later and more completely in books given as gifts. The children are led to see that saints are people, that a saint is not a special kind of person, but that every person can be a special kind of saint. Here is a saint who was a farmer, this one a mother, that one Chancellor of the Exchequer, here a philosopher, there the founder of an Order. What are you going to be, dear?—I want to be a nurse, a wife, a doctor, a sheep rancher. Do you? Why? Will it help you to serve God and people? You don't know, you just think it would be fun? Think it over, dear, think it over. . . .

Thus, with piety and patience, good parents raise Christians from one to heaven—that the Word may be made Flesh. A hard apostolate, but can they wish less?

Can they wish to raise Quizz Kids, brilliant with the fantastic values of television, atomic physics, jazz and beanies-with-probellers-on-top? Or culture-worshippers, prattling smartly of Picasso, Rouault, Hemingway and Waugh?

Eric Gill asked it rightly: "Do you think good taste can save us?"

Only one thing can save us. We must desire to be saints.

The achievement of holiness is the work of grace, of Him Who made us and knows what He will have of us. We need not see the fruition of grace in ourselves or in our children. Enough that we try.

But to wish anything less for us or for them is to cheat them of their birthright, deny our vocation, and degrade the sacrament of marriage to the status of an obscene playing with dolls.

NEIL MACCARTHY

## Smother Love

*Herein are a few notes about misguided maternal love,  
written by one of its victims.*

The first object of any person's love should be God. Mothers are no exception. Any woman who is a mother should have her loves ordered along these lines: first, God; secondly, her husband; thirdly, her children—furthermore, in this particular category, she should love her children equally. Any disarrangement of this order results in chaos and sometimes hatred.

We are not concerned here with women who give their first loves to their husbands and their second love to God. We are only slightly concerned with women who give their first love to God and their second love to their children, leaving their husbands in third place. We are greatly concerned with women who place their children above all else, and especially those who place a favorite son above all else.

The first thing to consider is that modern society, in its divorce from Christianity and consequently from charity, has made a god of sentimentality—thereby making it much easier for a woman to disorder her loves completely, making it seem, even that the disordered love for a husband or child is a natural love and greatly to be admired. There are people who will point with great admiration to a mother and son who are exclusively devoted to each other and say, "See what a great unselfish love they have for each other," without bothering to remember that two persons who are so attached that they can see nothing or no one else, are doing no one any good and themselves great harm. The point is society has expressed approval not so much of over-attachment of sons and mothers as of the circumstances that may lead to such attachment.

The second thing to consider is the circumstances society has created which make it so easy for a woman to pervert her love (Father Dowling remarks that when you have a husband loving his job more than his wife, and a wife loving her children more than her husband, it is quite truthful to say that they are both engaging in a vicious form of prostitution.) The chief circumstance is, I believe, that the idea of Christian marriage is pretty much absent in today's life. Romanticism has been vaunted to the skies—you know, good looks, good clothing, good income, and above all, a good sexual manner. (Sex has been vaunted to the skies too.) Anyway, a lot of people get married for a lot of bad reasons. Too many people get married with rosy visions of



long, passionate romance, which in the good old advertising fiction is supposed to be a thing of infinite youth and joy, untroubled by too many children. Marriage is supposed to be based on things like a mutual interest in tennis, sexual compatibility, and so on. We naively call it good sportsmanship. It's an attitude that I cannot comprehend at all.

Very few people think of marrying a man or woman and living with him or her for the love of Christ.

Consequently, when the woman finds herself married, the object of her love for her husband is her husband himself and not Christ, which is wrong and impracticable. Her love is too often eight parts love to nine parts sentimentality. A woman simply cannot place all of her love in a husband and expect the husband to justify that love. No man can take the place of God, and as long as human beings are created primarily to know God, love God, and serve God, placing one's love wholly in anything less than God is going to result in a series of disasters of all sizes.

The absence of Christ in modern marriage also creates a vacuum usually filled by selfishness on the parts of both partners.

The result of all this is that a lot of women wake up one fine day with the realization that their husbands are inadequate to their needs. From this realization they can do one of two things: turn to God or turn to their children. Most of them know more about their children than they do about God, and so they give themselves completely to their children—often "children" is an over-kill in which case God help the poor thing! Or there is the possibility of divorce, and when that happens, it's usually the man who keeps the offspring. A woman who is primarily interested in her children and has forgotten all about God has absolutely no standards by which to rear her children except those of the world.

Let's see what happens to a woman who is attached exclusively to her son.

She begins by loving her son to the absolute exclusion of everything else—the doting mother.

She continues by losing sight of her son as a personality, an individual in his own right, and loving only her child. You know, Daniel Burns loves not Daniel Burns but Mrs. Burns' son.

At the same time she does all she can, whether deliberately or not is here a matter of indifference, to fan the natural affection of her son for his mother until the thing has grown beyond all proportion. Frankly putting it, she sees to it that he will never be able to grow beyond his mother, which is one reason why a

lot of women discover with shock that they have married big overgrown boys.

Sooner or later she doesn't love even her child, but product of herself that the child represents. From there it becomes easier and easier to love herself more and more and stop considering her son as anything more than a household pet. I think she commits a great sin in so attaching her son to herself that his identity is eventually merged into hers, with a consequent loss of all his dignity and rights as an individual, ideas of his own, a chance of his own, a chance for a successful marriage which this sort of doting ruins before the fact. Whether she realizes it or not she is demonstrating contempt for her son, not love, in not giving him his manhood. Better that she should throw him out on his ear than to rob him of life! When she has completely bound her son to herself, everyone says, "See what great love this woman has for her son, so much that she has sacrificed her whole life for him." It's not true. What is true is that she has sacrificed her son's whole life to herself, without bothering ever to consider whether her son might have any other wishes in the matter. And she's done everything humanly possible to see to it that he has no wishes of any sort.

From self-love it's an easy step to hatred. The end of a derangement of love is hatred. And love of others can become hatred of others, I think, only if there is a great deal of false love in between, because I don't think that true love can ever become hatred. Hatred results usually because the son has sooner or later enough sense to see that his mother is ruining him and leaves him or because some exterior thing forces him to leave her, the Army for instance. If he leaves of his own will, everyone will blame him from his mother of his great ingratitude for all her selflessness. This isn't sorrow over a wayward son. It's self-pity of the worst sort. And she hates her son not because she has loved him and he has spurned the love, but because she has loved herself and he has outraged that self-love by withdrawing from it.

If something other than his own will takes him away, she may hate that thing, but she is going to do everything possible to prevent it. That is why we had a lot of mothers during the last draft dashing down to various draft boards to explain to the board their sons couldn't possibly go to the Army because, and because, and because.

There are a lot of women who attach themselves completely to their children because of circumstances beyond their control and without quite realizing what they are doing. Even the

men would avoid the snare of excessive maternal love if they had Christ in their lives. But when a woman who does not live for the love of God loses her husband, she thinks in an illogical way that her children are all she has left. These children deserve pity more than anything else, because a lot of them are trying to do what they should and just don't see the right direction in which to turn. What should happen to women who lose their husbands is that they should love God more and their children as before. What happens too frequently now is that they love God less and Junior much too much.

An aggravating factor in the personal situation is that motherhood in the United States has been made a fetish in all the possible wrong ways for all the possible wrong reasons. The effect this business has on the sons involved is somewhat as follows:

The son of an overzealous mother is in a most unfortunate position today. His mother herself and practically the whole of society combine in their opinion to give the boy the idea that Mommy belongs on some sort of pedestal. If Junior manages to spend his entire life with his mother the chances are that he will die of something more serious than a state of interesting neurosis; however, that seldom happens.

A lot of kids who haven't outgrown their devoted attachments fall in love, which is a fairly common proceeding. What happens then shouldn't happen to a dog, and it's pretty much up to Junior to make up his mind and stick to his guns despite the fact that his chief adversary has done her best to disarm him. With mother pulling at him in one direction and his love for a girl in the other, Junior occasionally gets pulled into two pieces and ends up in a nice, quiet hospital. Or mother wins and Junior gets sadder and more unhappy in a less and less vague manner. Or Junior goes ahead and gets married and his wife has a child to take care of without going to the bother of building one.

Men who have been made into lapdogs by their mothers are really men in anything more than the usual physical characteristics. For one thing it is this group of men who supply us with a large percentage of our homosexuals. It furnishes us with a large number of our alcoholics. It is also the group which populates large numbers of sanitariums and mental institutions. It is also the group which provides us with a large number of men who come equipped with a guarantee to break down in any crisis, simply because they have been so well trained to dependence that they can't take independence.

I have a friend who wanted to be a priest. His mother talked him out of it. He wanted to be an actor. His mother talked him out of it. He wanted to enlist in the last war. His mother talked him out of it. He wanted to be a writer. His mother talked him out of it. My friend wants to live. Some day his mother is going to talk him out of it.

My advice to any young man who realizes that his mother surrounds or is beginning to surround him is simply this: If you think you can reform her while living with her, you're crazy. Get out, and get out fast!

## "JUNIOR"

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*A poem written especially for those parents who fear that  
their children may become destitute if they carry  
the practice of virtue to excess.*



IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORSE

It's consoling to think,

On the edge of the brink,

That your child's in the poorhouse,

And not in the clink.



# BOOK REVIEWS

## Form and Substance

**THE CATHOLIC REFORMATION**  
by Pierre Janelle  
Bruce, \$4.50

This is a more interesting book than it would seem to be at first glance. It is one of those historical works, the fruit of conscientious

scholarship, which contains a lot of detailed and accurate information, yet simplified into a comprehending thesis. The thesis it does have seemed to me to be gratuitously tacked on. Even from the factual information the author gives I was tempted to analyze the circumstances differently. Nor would it be merely an intellectual exercise. The problems here dealt with have progeny in our own times.

Pierre Janelle describes the decadence in the Church preceding Protestant revolt. The major obstacle to reform was anarchy in the Church organization. The major abuses were directly traceable to the Renaissance: luxury, superficiality, worldliness, elegance, moral decay and extravagance. The author's thesis is that a reform could not be accomplished until Christians found a way to take what was good in Renaissance culture without what was bad, to take the forms of classical paganism without the content. He also holds that this was the accomplishment of Christian humanism (particularly as embodied in Jesuit schools and education) which finally accomplished the Catholic Reformation. It is, I suppose, a popular thesis. Yet even the book does not bear out.

For about a hundred years before the Protestant revolt there were abortive efforts at reforming the Church. They all failed because the people were too attached to the Renaissance way of life. Only after the terrible sack of Rome did the reform begin in earnest, and then it was too late to salvage Christendom. This reads like modern history. We too have seen, and continue to see, all sorts of attempts at reform, but they remain impotent in the face of such things as The American Way of life,—material splendor, television, cars and the rest. After the atomic bombing of New York and other places we can expect that those who are left (if any) will be sufficiently chastened to cooperate with widespread reform. The major difference between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries is that whereas formerly people were attached to business and elegance, now they are attached to comfort, science and industrialism. And just as people would have agreed in the sixteenth century that they wanted chastity in high prelates and a cessation of extravagant spending, only they didn't want to give up luxuriousness to gain it, so people will agree now that they don't like divorce or birth control or juvenile delinquency, but they are unwilling to part with country clubs, advertising, gadgets and the rest of the things which some people consider to be the occasions of the common modern sins. Can you take the forms of paganism without the content? Can you study history for his literary excellence without noticing that he deals with pagan gods and goddesses, whose doings were often obscene and are under the suspicion of diabolism? Can you have television without paganism and masses of morons?

It seems to me that Pierre Janelle makes a poor case in defense of his thesis. He rests it too heavily on a humanist named Sadolet, a classical scholar who wrote an ode to celebrate the finding of the Laocoon (of which sculptural group Adrian VI, who was one of the unsuccessful reformers, said merely "here were statues of pagan gods again"). Sadolet advised many of the Popes of that time, but his worth to the Church might have been because of his other excellencies rather than his humanism (just as it might be held that Thomas More was canonized for losing his head in a matter having nothing to do with his interest in humanism, so that the matter of the humanism has to be justified on other grounds than those of the martyr's sanctity).

The Church is always reformed by saints and it seems to me that if Janelle had used this as his major thesis then the thesis about humanism wouldn't precisely have fitted, even secondarily. You could hardly, for instance, have called Saint John of the Cross or Saint Teresa humanists.

It is true, though, that the reform was tempered by humanism, in fact by a fairly considerable residue of Renaissance culture. The Council of Trent has its proceedings written up elegantly and the *ratio studiorum* was certainly based on the study of the classics. Janelle considers there to have been a happy synthesis made of Renaissance culture and Christianity, but would it not be possible to hold instead that a compromise was made—a compromise not strong enough to prevent a considerable reconstruction of Church life, yet insidious enough to prevent a total restoration?

One thing that has to be accounted for is that, despite the counter-reformation (and without underestimating its tremendous accomplishments) the Western world has been quite steadily worsening until today it seems to be at its very lowest point, in art, literature, music, economics, politics, morality and indeed every phase of temporal life. This is as true in the Catholic countries as in the Protestant countries although in a different way. In this light it looks as though the Catholic Reformation was only partially successful and that its weak point was precisely its failure to detach itself from pagan culture. An alternate thesis would regard the Middle Ages (for all their shortcomings, in regard to which I think Janelle is unjust) as the high point of Christian society, and the problem would be to account for the decay and corruption of a civilization so essentially ordered to Christ. It could be held that it was precisely the reintroduction into Europe of ancient pagan culture, through the accidental instrumentality of the Crusades, that set in motion the successive attacks on Christianity which are culminating in our day. With the classics came the glorification of the purely natural (as opposed to the supernatural), the exaltation of culture rather than holiness, or as preliminary to holiness instead of subsequent to it, the over-refinement of manners along with the perversion of morals. All these things had a certain splendor in the Renaissance, and all of them too are still with us but now far from splendid. If you hold, as Janelle does in this book, that a humanistic synthesis was made in the Catholic Reformation, how then will you account for the utter corruption of our own day?

PETER MICHAELS



## Not Seen Through Faith

### CRED HISTORY

Daniel-Rops  
transl. by K. Madge  
Ingmans Green, \$4.50

itions upon the ancestors and forerunners of Our Lord. These influences include the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Hittite, the Assyrian, the Persian and the Greek.

However well chosen as the subject may be, the very significance of the subject demands deft handling. The treatment of the subject matter in this book seems to belong to a trend apparent in certain French Catholic writers to give the natural explanation of miraculous events full whenever possible. Because Mr. Daniel-Rops is a scholarly man, this is done cleverly—one cannot find serious fault with its orthodoxy.

A concrete example of this particular and subtle interpretation is as follows:

These ten "plagues" are presented in the Bible as miraculous. It matters little that "water turned to blood" suggests the flood of the Nile which is as a matter of fact red and unwholesome as it begins to rise; that swarms of insects and frogs are frequent when the flood rises high; that locusts are a common cause of trouble, those great mauve and yellow locusts that Saint John the Baptist lived on in the desert. The demoniacal shadows may have been caused by clouds of sand carried by the wind, the deadly *khamzin* and festering sores are not rare in the East. It remains true that in such a mounting series of catastrophes the whole of Egypt saw the "finger of God."

Because the nature of the subject is not only an historical one, but as a Christian it is also a profoundly meditative one, it is unfortunate that the necessary sensitivity, insight, and discretion are occasionally so lacking. On page 51, Joseph is described as "a Desraeli, with a crown as Queen Victoria." The unfortunate comparison is indicative of this lack of discretion found in the book. Again on page 30, we read, "Pharaoh, with his young girl's face and Nehasi with his Negroid head, are incapable of doing great things in politics." One wonders if Mr. Daniel-Rops thinks that having a "Negroid head" of itself would weaken one's influence on politics.

Mr. Daniel-Rops is undoubtedly a very clever man—however in *Sacred History* he romps among the spiritual giants of the ages with a somewhat unbecoming ease.

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# I N T R O D U C I N G

The "Bible" of the Family's Sacramental Life



FOR AS MANY  
of you as have been  
baptized in Christ,  
have put on CHRIST

GAL 3:27

## THIS IS A PAGE

from *Our Family Book of Life*, a new, liturgical record book for the Christian family. Starting with the marriage of the parents, it marks all the supernatural milestones: Baptism (space for eight children), the blessing of the new mother, First Confession, First Communion, Confirmation, the marriage of the children, religious vows, Holy Orders (space for one priest son), Extreme Unction, death and burial, with even a niche and some consolation for the death of an unbaptized infant. There are special pages for photographs along the way. *Our Family Book of Life* was prepared by two monks of Conception Abbey. Sister Mary Leonarda, O.S.B., has done the calligraphy. It is not necessary to point out that this makes the ideal wedding present. Bound in white leather, it measures 8½" x 10½", and costs five dollars.

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